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OCCASIONAL PAPERS, NO. 8

REPORT

OF THE

FIFTH TUSKEGEE NEGRO CONFERENCE

1896

BY

JOHN QUINCY JOHNSON

*Formerly Instructor in Mathematics in the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial
Institute, Ala.*

BALTIMORE

PUBLISHED BY THE TRUSTEES

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From 1882 to 1891, the General Agent of the Trust was Rev. A. G. HAYGOOD, D. D., of Georgia, who resigned the office when he became a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Since 1891, the duties of a General Agent have been discharged by Dr. J. L. M. CURRY, 1736 M St., N. W., Washington, D. C., who is Chairman of the Educational Committee.

* Died in office.

† Resigned.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

The Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund propose to publish from time to time papers that relate to the education of the colored race. These papers are designed to furnish information to those who are concerned in the administration of schools, and also to those who by their official stations are called upon to act or to advise in respect to the care of such institutions.

The Trustees believe that the experimental period in the education of the blacks is drawing to a close. Certain principles that were doubted thirty years ago now appear to be generally recognized as sound. In the next thirty years better systems will undoubtedly prevail, and the aid of the separate States is likely to be more and more freely bestowed. There will also be abundant room for continued generosity on the part of individuals and associations. It is to encourage and assist the workers and the thinkers that these papers will be published.

Each paper, excepting the first number (made up chiefly of official documents), will be the utterance of the writer whose name is attached to it, the Trustees disclaiming in advance all responsibility for the statement of facts and opinions.

THE CALL FOR THE CONFERENCE.

THE FIFTH TUSKEGEE NEGRO CONFERENCE, TO BE HELD IN THE BLACK BELT OF ALABAMA.

The Negro Conferences held at Tuskegee, Alabama, the last four years, under the auspices of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama, have proved so helpful and instructive in showing the masses of colored people how to lift themselves up in their industrial, educational, moral and religious life, and have created so much general interest throughout the country, that it has been decided to hold another session of this Conference, Thursday, March 5, 1896.

The aim will be, as in the four previous years, to bring together for a quiet Conference, not the politicians, but the representatives of the common, hard-working farmers and mechanics—the bone and sinew of the Negro race—ministers and teachers.

Two objects will be kept in view—first, to find out from the people themselves the facts as to their condition and get their ideas as to the remedies for the present evils—second, to get information as to how the young men and women now being educated can best use their education in helping the masses.

At the last Conference there were nearly 800 representatives present and a large number gave encouraging evidence of how, as a result of previous meetings, homes had been secured, school-houses built, school terms extended, and the moral life of the people bettered.

In view of the economy which the people have been forced to practice during the last two years, owing to poor crops and low prices of cotton, this Conference will present an excellent medium through which to teach permanent economy and thrift.

It is planned to devote a portion of the session of this Conference to a Woman's Conference.

On Friday, March 6th, the day following the Conference, there will be a meeting of the officers and teachers of the colored schools in the South, who may be at the Conference, for the purpose of comparing views and taking advantage of the lessons that may have been gotten from the Conference the previous day.

It is believed that such a meeting for the elevation of the Negro, held in the Black Belt, with the lessons and impressions of the direct contact with the masses of the colored people the previous day fresh before them, can only result in much practical good to the cause of Negro education.

Aside from the work to be done in the South in an educational and moral sense, there can be no permanent prosperity till the whole industrial system, (especially the "Mortgage System") is revolutionized and put on a right basis, and there can be no better way to bring about the desired result than through such organizations as this Negro Conference.

Further information about the Conference may be had from

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON,
*Principal, Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute,
Tuskegee, Ala.*

Note.—When Mr. Booker T. Washington issued the call for the first Negro Conference, Feb. 23, 1892, he thought there would not be more than seventy-five who would respond, but to his surprise nearly 500 came. In February, 1893, about 800 attended the conference, representing, it is safe to say, a negro population of 200,000. In 1894 and '95 the attendance was increased to something near 1000. In 1895 and '96 and especially 1896, the conference idea had become so prevalent in the South, that there were representatives from sister conferences which had been formed in almost every Southern State from Virginia to Texas.

Many conventions have been held, and many resolutions against wrongs, real and imaginary, have been passed by the negro of the South since the war. But the Tuskegee movement seems to be the first serious effort whose wisdom, as voiced in the Conference declarations, is approved by the general suffrage of the Nation, North and South, white and black. It certainly tends to make the negro a free man in deed and in truth.

J. Q. J.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE. 1896.

THE OPENING.

Another Tuskegee Negro Conference has been held. Nearly one thousand country people, men and women, attended this session. On the morning of March 5th this gathering assembled in the Chapel of Porter Hall, one of the buildings of the Normal and Industrial Institute. The meeting was opened by Bishop Benjamin T. Tanner, who read the first chapter of Isaiah. The Conference then sang that old, familiar hymn, "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound." Prayer was offered by "Father" Jeter, who has attended every session of the Conference from the beginning.

At this juncture Mr. Warren Logan, Treasurer of the Institute, took charge of the meeting and began to explain why Principal Washington was not present. He stated that the Principal had gone to New York to speak at a missionary gathering over which President Cleveland presided, but that he hoped Mr. Washington would arrive before the proceedings of the Conference were carried very far. Just at this point one of the horny-handed sons of the soil arose and said: "He's done come," which was not more than uttered when Mr. Washington entered the room, in the midst of applause, accompanied by President Meserve, of Shaw University.

Mr. Washington, in his opening remarks to the Conference, said: "I want to thank you for your presence to-day. I

know how busy you are at this season of the year, and how anxious you are to get back to your mules and oxen, but I think that you all will be helped by a day like this, and go back with your hearts lightened by hearing of each other's encouragements and discouragements.

"I want to emphasize the object of these conferences. When they were first instituted, it was to confine ourselves mainly to conditions within our own power to remedy. We might discuss many wrongs which should be righted; but it seems to me that it is best to lay hold of the things we can put right rather than those we can do nothing but find fault with. Be perfectly frank with each other; state things as they are; do not say anything for mere sound, or because you think it will please one or displease another; let us hear the truth on all matters. We have many things to discourage and disappoint us, and we sometimes feel that we are slipping backward; but, I believe, if we do our duty in getting property, Christian education, and character, in some way or other the sky will clear up, and we shall make our way onward."

Unlike several previous conferences, this one was favored with bright skies. No rain clouds or swollen streams discouraged the attendance. Doubtless, this accounts for the presence of so many women at this session. Hitherto, the men have said that the women knew too much already, and that they did not need the benefit derived from attending these annual meetings. But the women came in larger numbers than ever. They constituted fully one-third of the Conference at the morning session. In the afternoon they had a meeting of their own, an account of which is given in the following pages. Some came walking; others had left home as early as midnight in order to be here on time. They came on all manner of vehicles and conveyances; some on horses and mules, others on the patient donkey. The ox-cart was also here, and many mud-bespattered buggies and wagons. Old men and old women, in whose faces could be seen the marks of the "old regime," came from the sand hills and planta-

tions of Alabama to spend one day in school. Such is the spectacle witnessed at every negro conference at this place.

These men and women came together not to air their grievances ; nor to whine against the injustice of the present social conditions ; nor to demand the ballot as the imperative need to change the present status of society in the South ; nor to inveigh against the tyranny of monopolies, the selfishness of the rich and helplessness of the poor. None of these things came up for discussion ; but, under the wise and sober leadership of Booker T. Washington, they were trying to find out what *they* could do to help themselves. They believe in the philosophy of " Uncle Remus :" " Fussing about the weather is mighty poor farming."

The following is a list of visitors who were present at the Conference :

Miss Briggs, Boston, Mass.; Rt. Rev. B. T. Tanner, Philadelphia; Rev. Pitt Dillingham, Calhoun, Ala.; Rev. F. A. Chase, Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn.; Rev. E. C. Mitchell, Leland University, New Orleans; Rev. J. Q. Johnson, Princeton, N. J.; President Charles F. Meserve, Shaw University, Raleigh, N. C.; Mr. Daniel C. Smith, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Mrs. Victoria E. Mathews, New York City; Mrs. A. D. Munson, New York City; Mrs. A. S. Steele, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Prof. I. N. Randall, Lincoln University, Chester Co., Pa.; Miss Flora Mitchell, Clark University, Atlanta, Ga.; Miss Mary I. Williams, Spelman Seminary, Atlanta, Ga.; Miss Margaret Aitken, Spelman Seminary, Atlanta, Ga.; Miss Mabel Hay Barrows, Boston, Mass.; Miss Virginia Holbrook, Boston, Mass.; Rev. Wilbur P. Thirkield, Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Ga.; Mrs. D. M. Benjamin, Milwaukee, Wis.; Miss A. E. Cleveland, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.; Mr. John E. Gale, Haverhill, Mass.; Mrs. J. L. Kaine, Milwaukee, Wis.; Mr. R. O. Simpson, Furman, Ala.; The Misses Stokes, New York City; Rev. F. H. Means, Windham, Conn.; Miss Charlotte R. Thorn, Calhoun, Ala.; Miss Hattie Cooper, Calhoun, Ala.; Rev. A. L. Phillips, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Rev. O. B. Wilson, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Rev. H. H. Proctor, Atlanta, Ga.; Miss Pierce, Plaineville, Conn.; Mrs. H. B. Sharp, Boydton Institute, Boydton, Va.; Miss A. L. White, Montgomery Industrial School, Montgomery, Ala.; Miss Frances C. Baylor, Norfolk, Va.; Miss Cornelia Bowen, Waugh, Ala.; Prof. Thos. N. Chase, Atlanta University; Prof. W. B. Paterson, Montgomery, Ala.; Mr. Charles W. Hare, Editor *Tuskegee News*; Mr. W. F. Crockett, Montgomery, Ala.; Rev. W. H. Mixon, Selma, Ala.; Mr. W. H. Stewart, State University, Louisville, Ky.; Mr. R. L. Ruffin, Birmingham, Ala.; Rev. F. G. Snelson, Athens,

Ga.; Rev. H. B. Delany, St. Augustine School, Raleigh, N. C.; Mr. G. G. McLaury, Selma, Ala.; Rev. R. C. Bedford, Rockton, Ill.

Letters of regret were received from President Merrill E. Gates, of Amherst College; Rev. Dr. C. D. Hartranft, of Hartford Theological Seminary; President Thomas J. Calloway, of Alcorn College, Miss.; Charles H. Corey, of the Richmond (Va.) Theological Seminary; W. B. Weaver, of the Gloucester Agricultural and Industrial School, Cappahosic, Va.; President Dinkins, of Selma University; President D. O. John, of Clark University, Atlanta, Ga.; Mrs. Clinton B. Fisk, President of the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the M. E. Church; Rev. George L. Cheney, Richmond, Va.; Rev. Dr. A. F. Beard, of the American Missionary Association; and Bishop Penick, of Baltimore.

After Mr. Washington had sent out the Committee on Declarations, he called upon Father Mitchell to speak. Father Mitchell was one of the picturesque figures of the Conference. He is about eighty years of age. He said in part: "Now be quiet. Hold my hat. How de settlement is goin'-goin' better 'an in ten year befor: less mortgage, not so much cotton, more wheat and potatoes, an' peas, an' syrup. I'm better off 'an I ever was in my life befor. Preachers are getting to God an' raisin' de people up out of deir slow way of livin' to a nice way of livin'. I'm glad of dat. Now hold yer watch on me, I want ter make one point on you, Mr. President, I never seed de country so good on account of your pace up here. Slavery is all gone now, an' I hope it will never come back agin. I wants to give somethin' to help feed all dese people, an' I wants all of you farmers to give somethin'." Father Mitchell at this point called for a subscription to help the school, but when asked what he would give, said: "I won't tell what I'se gwine to give." However, many of the farmers voted to bring something out of their slender means to the next Conference as a contribution to the work of the institution.

REPORTS FROM SISTER CONFERENCES.

Since the institution of this phase of the Tuskegee movement, other conferences have been established in many counties of the State. In some counties there are two or more such

organizations. The influence of this movement has even extended to other Southern States; Georgia, South Carolina, and Texas had delegates at this Conference. Conferences are also organized in North Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee, Florida, and Louisiana.

Reports from these sister conferences were heard with much interest. The representative of the Salem, Ala., Conference, said: "We have been behind in church and school work, but the people had been urged to hold a conference on matters pertaining to their good. They greatly enjoyed it, and as a result had made arrangements to build a school-house, and were trying to get homes and mortgage their crops less than ever before.

The representative of the Snow Hill, Ala., Conference, said that they had built a large school-house, and were cultivating twenty acres of land in connection with their school. They have four teachers and the school term was eight months long. He said about twenty had purchased homes. The last Conference was held June 31st, and was the second held at that place. Many were still under the weight of the mortgage system, but are getting out as fast as possible. Through this Conference a strong sentiment had been created against the mortgage system and in favor of purchasing homes. There are several colored farmers in this community who own from one to two hundred acres of land.

Mr. R. O. Simpson, a Southern white gentleman, of Snow Hill, was introduced to the Conference and was asked to say a few words. Mr. Simpson is a large planter and merchant, and was formerly a slave-owner. He takes great interest in the school and church work of the colored people. He said: "The colored people make better citizens when they own homes. I was a slave-holder, and was reared among the colored people. Some of them buy more land than they are able to pay for or take care of. Our colored teachers are doing good work; they are all graduates of Tuskegee. The laws of the State make mortgages a necessity where a man

owns no real property or is not able to feed his own family or stock. I advise everyone to get rid of mortgages, though I am a merchant; they are damaging both to the white man and the black man. I attended this Conference last year, and it did me good. Whatever is for your good is for my good."

Mr. Simpson said that fifteen or twenty colored men had secured small farms in his community. He said also that those who have paid for their homes never lose them. It may be said of Mr. Simpson that he is a representative of thousands of Southern white men—a large number of that "Silent South," who are in a quiet way helping their "brother in black" to make himself a better citizen.

The farmers of Calhoun County reported that a land company had been formed. In their Conference it had been brought out that the colored people did not take much interest in their homes because they did not own them. This land company had bought forty acres for \$265.00. This was put under cultivation and the profits equally divided. There are twenty-seven members in the company, two of whom own more than forty acres each. The land is worth from \$8.00 to \$10.00 per acre. In their community the white people are willing to sell the negro any number of acres he is able to pay for.

President Thirkield, of the Gammon Theological Seminary, Atlanta, Ga., spoke of the conference which had been held at Lagrange, Ga. This conference is an outgrowth of the Tuskegee movement, and has accomplished much good.

DECLARATIONS.

At this point Mr. James D. McCall, Chairman of the Committee on Declarations, made the following report, which formed the basis of discussion during the Conference.

The judgment of the Fifth Annual Tuskegee Negro Conference, as to the matters brought before it, is expressed in the following declarations :

1. We are more and more convinced, as we gather in these Annual Conferences, that we shall secure our rightful place as citizens in proportion as we possess Christian character, education, and property. To this end we urge parents to exercise rigid care in the control of their children, the doing away with the one-room cabin and the mortgage habit; we urge the purchase of land, improved methods of farming, diversified crops, attention to stock-raising, dairying, fruit-growing, and more interest in learning the trades, now too much neglected.

2. We urge that a larger proportion of our college educated men and women give the race the benefit of their education, along industrial lines, and that more educated ministers and teachers settle in the country districts.

3. As in most places the public schools are in session only three or four months during the year, we urge the people, by every means possible, to supplement this time by at least three or four additional months each year, that no sacrifice be considered too great to keep the children in school, and that only the best teachers be employed.

4. We note, with pleasure, the organization of other Conferences, and we advise that the number be still more largely increased.

As we look back over the five annual sessions of this Conference, we are convinced that marked improvement has been made, among the masses, in getting rid of the one-room cabin, in the purchase of land, in greater economy, in getting out of debt, in the raising of more food supplies, in the more considerate treatment of women, a greater desire for education, a higher standard of morals, and a widespread and intense purpose to get into better conditions.

1. *The One-Room Cabin.*

The one-room cabin was the first part of the Declarations discussed by the Conference. This is preëminently one source of the moral degradation of the negro. Often large families

of fifteen or more occupy these hovels, thus rendering privacy an impossibility. Here we also find the cause of consumption and kindred diseases, contracted in these one-room cabins, which too frequently are not proof against the inclemency of the weather. Thus the death rate of the negro is increased; thus his morals and his health are menaced. But the one-room cabin is doomed. The educational value of these Conferences is no more clearly seen than in the general effort made to obtain larger houses.

As county after county was heard from, it was evident that the one-room cabin is fast disappearing. Many voices spoke to the following effect: From Mt. Meigs it was reported that few were contented to live in such a house, though there were none in the family but husband and wife. If they could do no better, they would build a pole house for additional room. A Tuskegee student from Lowndesboro said the houses were very small in her district—more like a cotton-seed house than a place to live in; whereupon one of the delegates, with great disgust, cried out: "Dem darkies ain't free. I lives in a free community." Another delegate, from Barbour County, said: "I live in a six-room house. Our people are getting out of the one-room cabin as fast as possible. I put them down as hogs who live in a one-room house." Father Mitchell said: "At Warrior Stand, where I lives, you can't give a man a one-room cabin. We jest goin' right along." Rev. G. W. Jeter, of Cowles Station, said: "No one who has visited these Conferences lives in a one-room house. We need one thousand Washingtons—one at every cross-road, on every mountain top. I have had fifteen children, fourteen living, and never lived in a one-room house." Another delegate said: "Where people own land they are more apt to have a larger house. The average log cabin costs from \$10.00 to \$12.00. Many of the colored people in my section moved away because the white folks would not build them better houses." The young lady who made this remark was scarcely through, when one of the farmers said, to the amusement of

the Conference: "The young lady are right." The report from Kowaliga showed one hundred families owning four thousand acres of land.

Substantial progress along the line of house-building is seen to the best advantage in Macon County, in and near Tuskegee. Mr. Albert Johnson reports eighty-two persons who had bought and paid for houses within the last two years. Twenty-five others have now paid one-half the price in the same time.

2. *The Purchase of Land.*

If these Conferences have helped the people along any one line, they certainly have made them see the necessity of obtaining land. The mortgage system has operated very seriously against this. While some of the members of the Conference had been able to purchase land within the last year or two, the vast majority is still hampered by the mortgage system. This is the condition of the race throughout the entire Black Belt. It is not that the whites will not sell the negro land. It may be said that throughout the South there is a general disposition to allow the negro to accomplish whatever he can in this direction. Not a few cases could be mentioned in which the whites have encouraged and helped the blacks to accumulate landed property. However, it would not be wide of the truth to say that four-fifths of the negro farmers still allow the most binding mortgages to be made upon their unplanted crops, and that frequently in the fall all a man has raised is swept away to pay the mortgage. He has neither money nor provision to subsist upon during the winter.

A representative from Benton reported fifteen persons who owned 1,800 acres of land, with good homes. Another from Russell County spoke of hard times by reason of mortgages. Very few were encouraged or had the money to buy land. A Presiding Elder said: "In my circuit I have been over many counties in the Black Belt, and I notice a general improvement, on the whole, in the purchase of

land." A teacher from Montgomery County said: "We are desiring but not owning much yet." In Wetumpka the colored people last year invested \$3,500 in land. Fifteen families in Birmingham were said to own \$5,000 worth of real estate. Near Cowles Station the colored people owned 1,527 acres of land. At Mt. Meigs the colored people owned nearly \$40,000 worth of landed property. Thus the reports ran concerning the purchase of land. In several places the colored people could not buy land because they could not purchase a whole plantation. Planters were unwilling to sell small farms. It was suggested that a good service would be done in buying large plantations and selling them out to colored people in tracts suited to them. This principle has been followed with good results in various parts of the South.

3. *Economy.*

The Conference next took up the question of economy. It may be said that the negro of the South is very wasteful, both of time and money. The Conferences from the beginning have emphasized the idea that farmers must work Saturdays as well as other days of the week, winter as well as summer. Colored farmers waste altogether too much time on the street corners on Saturdays. Then, too, the purchase of cheap jewelry, candies, and unnecessary articles of dress has been discouraged by these Conferences. When Mr. Washington raised these questions many different responses came from the delegates. One said that a merchant complained bitterly that his sale of candies was nothing like it used to be. From Mt. Meigs the report came that a company of women had been organized for the practice of economy and keeping out of debt. They clubbed together their butter and eggs till they could buy one hundred pounds of meat, at five cents a pound, which at retail price would cost ten cents. They had bought 1,300 pounds thus far and divided it among the members of the club.

Miss Neelie Bowen, a Tuskegee graduate, who teaches at Mt. Meigs, said: "We don't know how to economize time. We have organized a farmers' union in our community, and no one can join who has not a model acre which he cultivates at odd times, and which is planted wholly with articles of food, and he must have at least one hog in the pen before he can become a member of this union. One man put a quarter of an acre in onions and realized \$14.00 in cash from it. Go home and go to work and do something, and do not talk so much." Great applause followed these remarks. Another woman said: "I was a widow. I had two children and John — had five. I married him and that made seven. He had only one room in the house. I told him he had to have more and he got more. I have one room especially for cooking—'cose I don't propose to have everybody see what I cooks. I have learned more to-day than I ever did before. Let sardines and snuff and candy and red ribbons alone. Buy one acre at a time. Some of you men just want to put us in de white folks' kitchen and feed you, while you walk up an' down de road." Another woman, relating her experience, told of a farmer and his wife who went into a country store and the clerks tried to persuade them to spend their money for things they did not need. She closed by saying: "You must know your own mind and learn to say 'No.'"

A great excitement was created when Nelson Felton took from his pocket a mortgage which had been cancelled. He held it up before the Conference and said that he was going to show it to the people until the last thread of it was gone. Prof. Chase, of Fisk University, here suggested that next year all such cancelled mortgages be brought to the Conference.

4. *The "Hog Union."*

Another practical application of the Tuskegee philosophy is seen in the formation of the "Hog Union" in many counties of the State. Many delegates reported the success of

this idea. To join the Union one must own a hog; this hog must be fattened and killed and prepared for home use. One thing which has kept down the colored farmer in the South is the fact that he has had to pay two or three prices for meat when he mortgaged his crop for home supplies. The "Hog Union" is so spreading that many farmers are now raising their own meat. One of the standing principles of these Conferences is to encourage the people to raise all of their home supplies. This was forcibly put by one of the delegates, who said: "Don't put all your ground in cotton. Raise your own viueuals. Dat will help kill off the mortgage bug. Raise your own bacon, corn and vegetables." Quite a good many declared that during the past year they had been able to raise on their land nearly everything in the shape of food used in the household.

5. *The Model Acre.*

The "Model Acre" idea is another instance of what these Conferences are accomplishing. Each farmer is urged to raise all he can on one acre for immediate home use. On this acre he is to plant such things as beans, peas, potatoes, corn, onions, etc. All the time not put on the main crop is to be given to this acre. One farmer reported that he had raised a crop of onions on a part of his acre and had realized enough to keep his daughter in school for one year. In this way the people are taught to economize their time. The colored farmers of the South have thrown away and do yet waste a large amount of valuable time by doing nothing during winter months and by making holidays of Saturdays. This practice has given rise to another Tuskegee principle: Work all the year round, Saturdays as well as other week days.

On this same line of economy, mention was made of pistols and the large amounts paid for them. Excursions were also condemned as a useless way to spend money.

6. The School Question.

The school question always occupies a large part of the Conference discussions. The State of Alabama makes no appropriations for the erection of school-houses. In many places the colored people, stimulated by these Conferences, have raised and are raising money by private subscription to build them. This idea is carried into effect also by most of the Tuskegee graduates who go into the country districts. The redemption of the race will be wrought out in the country. Tuskegee students are urged to go into these remote districts and stay there, at any sacrifice, until something is accomplished.

Politics and sectarianism enter too much into the schools. The Conference voted unanimously that these were to be condemned.

As to the length of the school term, it was found that in fifty-nine districts the schools lasted three months; in sixteen districts, five months; in ten districts, six months; in fourteen districts, eight months; in three districts, nine months. Thirty districts were reported as having extended the school term beyond three months.

One of the most promising and significant outgrowths of the Tuskegee movement was reported in this Conference. Mt. Meigs, we believe, is Tuskegee's eldest daughter. Kowaliga, however, promises to be as thrifty. Under the leadership of Mr. C. J. Calloway, a graduate of Fisk University, this work is now being carried forward. A short account of the work already accomplished appears in the following:

"Here and there a bright spot is to be found even in the Black Belt. Kowaliga is such an oasis in the desert. This community is thirty-five miles from Tuskegee, and fifteen miles from any railroad station. The negro population is about 700. A band of Tuskegee workers have gone to this place on short excursions and advised them. Such an inspiration has been received from Tuskegee ideas and methods,

that the common cry is: "Let us have a school like Tuskegee." They have gone to work themselves to do what they can to secure permanent buildings. As a result of three months of effort in that direction, they have contributed \$500 in labor which they gave at much sacrifice from their farming. There are 70,000 feet of lumber on the grounds, 20,000 shingles, a school site of two acres, all of which has been paid for. They have rented fifteen acres of land which they will cultivate with volunteer labor, and take the money thus realized to supplement the school fund. They are in great need of help to erect the building which they have begun, as money is needed to pay skilled labor. Tuskegee is thus multiplying itself in the Black Belt of Alabama."

THE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE.

This is preëminently the age of woman. Even the colored women on remote cotton plantations begin to feel that they must come forward in the march of progress with their husbands and sons. Surely here is great field for Christian effort. Tuskegee, true to her destiny, has begun this work already. Some of the lady teachers of the Institute meet the country women every Saturday afternoon in a hired hall in the town of Tuskegee. This work was begun several years ago by Mrs. B. T. Washington and Dr. Halle Tanner Johnson who was then resident physician at the school. It has steadily grown in numbers and interest. We believe that from this little mission grew the idea of the Woman's Conference. All hail, then, to the colored women of the South, coming from the cotton patch, from the cornfield, from the hoe, from the plow, from the kitchen, from the washtub, to spend one day in school at Tuskegee. Down-trodden and forced into wrong for well-nigh three hundred years, the colored womanhood of the nation is just now beginning to rise from the dust.

In the afternoon about two hundred of these country women met in Phelps Hall to discuss practical home questions. Mrs.

B. T. Washington presided. This was a very helpful meeting. Many important questions were brought up, such as : The death rate among children ; cleanliness, and care of the home ; the necessity of good character in ministers and teachers ; the cultivation of closer relation between mother and son, as well as between mother and daughter. It was urged that attention be given to bee culture, poultry-raising, the drying and canning of wild and cultivated fruits, also that a conference of women be formed in every community.

This Conference, at the close of its deliberations, adopted the following resolutions :

1. We realize that our homes are not always what they should be. We believe that much of the immorality which now exists can be traced to the one-room cabin. We urge upon every woman to insist upon the securing of more than one room.

2. It is true that the death rate of the race, especially of little children, is on the increase. This is largely due to the lack of proper conditions of home life. There is a lack of cleanliness, pure air, proper clothing and proper food. We urge that every woman keep her home clean, well aired, and her children well fed and clothed.

3. We know that women, by their efforts, largely support the ministers and teachers. We urge upon every woman to see to it that only strictly moral men and women occupy their pulpits and teach their children.

4. We believe that it depends upon the women as to whether or not we receive the respect of men, especially of our men. Some women are too careless as to the loud manner in which they act on the streets and in other public places, such as churches, railway stations, and the like. Some are unduly familiar with men. We urge that each woman see to it that in the streets and in other public places she speak in a quiet tone of voice, that she refrain from spitting on the street, and that she does not at any time act familiarly with men.

5. We believe that there is still room for improvement among some of our women as to the manner of their dress. We urge that neat calico or gingham dresses of modest color take the place of the coarse homespun one; that the dark-colored sailor hat take the place of the red bandanna; that women always wear neat-looking shoes, and that they never wear their hair wrapped in strings.

6. During certain months of the year there is little or no work for women. We urge upon every woman the raising of poultry, and, consequently, the production of eggs, the making of butter, the picking, drying and canning of fruit, such as berries, plums, peaches and apples, the cultivating of a garden and raising of bees. Let her sell her produce to the best advantage, reserving a portion for home use. Let the woman grasp every opportunity to help her husband, in order that the purchase of a home may be more possible.

7. We believe that there should be a close confidence between mother and son, as well as between mother and daughter. We urge that mothers seek to gain the confidence of their children, and thus be in position to guide them aright.

8. We believe that in every community there should exist a conference where women may come together and confer upon the best methods of improving the home life, the rearing of children, and doing everything possible to lift the standard of womanhood.

THE WORKERS' CONFERENCE.

Many teachers from institutions founded for the education of colored people, remained over till the next day, May 6, to attend the Workers' Conference. Among them were President Meserve, of Shaw University, Raleigh, N. C.; President Randall, of Lincoln University; President Mitchell, of Leeland University; Rev. Pitt Dillingham, of the Calhoun School, Calhoun, Ala.; Professor Chase, of Atlanta University; Professor Delaney, of St. Augustine School, Raleigh, N. C.;

Professor F. A. Chase, of Fisk University; and President W. P. Thirkield, of Gammon Theological Seminary.

Mr. Washington was elected Chairman of this meeting. In his opening remarks he said that the object of this meeting was to have reports from the various educational institutions represented in the Conference, and to find out to what extent they were meeting the needs of the masses. Eighty-five per cent. of the negroes lived in the country districts. Are they being reached? Many of the educated colored men flock to the cities to find more remunerative employment. Some sacrifice must be made if the great majority of the race is to be reached. This country problem demands more of our attention than it has received.

The Conference then made the declarations of the previous day the basis of the discussion.

Rev. Dr. A. L. Phillips, of Tuscaloosa, spoke of the great necessity of an educated ministry for the colored people. The race needed a large number of ministers who were well trained in the English Bible, and who were willing to go to the people and do the work of missionaries. He emphasized the great call for this ministry in the country districts. They must go to these remote places, and be willing to work for a part of their living.

Dr. Phillips is a southern white man, and represented the work carried on by the Southern Presbyterian Church among the negroes of the South. This institution is at Tuscaloosa, Ala., and aims to give thorough training in the English Bible to those who are not prepared to take higher courses. It has been very successful along this line, and has sent out many consecrated ministers to the remoter country districts. These preachers are urged to work for a part of their support by following some other occupation. Dr. Phillips expressed the wish that all ministers had more of the Christ idea, which is illustrated by such passages as the following one: "And when He saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion."

President Thirkield, of Gammon Seminary, spoke of the work which had been done by the uneducated negro ministers. They have built a large number of churches, worth many millions of dollars. They have held the great mass of the colored people in the churches. Can we hold the rising generation to the church? More Bible schools like Phelps Hall were needed. Not as many men go into the ministry as formerly, and people do not now give as much to the church. While not combatting the idea that the country districts needed a better class of ministers, Dr. Thirkield showed that the demand of the cities was quite as great.

Mr. Washington also urged that both teachers and preachers going into the country should follow some kind of pursuit besides their profession. He thought that the minister who preached two sermons a week and attended one prayer-meeting must necessarily have a good deal of time on his hands.

President Mitchell, of Leland University, New Orleans, speaking of the colored school teachers of the State of Mississippi, said that there were 603 who held first grade certificates. All were examined by boards of education composed entirely of white men, who were disposed to give the negro justice. The colored people are as intelligent as the whites of the same generation. Of two teachers' institutes, one colored and the other white, there were fourteen college graduates in the colored and only four in the white. Dr. Mitchell attributed this to the work done by the Northern missionary schools. In many parts of the South the negro has a better chance to get a higher education than the whites. The colored teachers from these schools are better than the white teachers. Unlike some other parts of the South—Charleston, S. C., notably,—there are no white teachers in the common schools of Mississippi.

During the morning session a lively discussion was held on the relation of the college educated man and woman to the masses. It was conceded that, while the race has many such men and women, it has but few who are able to lead the

people along industrial lines. Mr. Washington pointed out that many industries which were formerly under the exclusive control of the colored people are fast slipping from them. A large colored church was being built in a Southern city, but the work was all done by white men, because no colored men had fitted themselves for the task. Laundry work was once almost entirely done by the colored people of the South, but now the modern steam laundry has taken this largely out of their hands. Mr. Washington holds that the college man should apply his superior knowledge to the practical affairs of life—his chemistry to scientific agriculture, his mathematics to land surveying, etc. He doubted if at present many young colored men were preparing themselves as agricultural chemists. All higher education should be turned into practical account. College men should not all try to become lawyers and doctors and ministers (as much as these are needed), but many more should become captains of industry, contractors and builders; in fact, they should prepare themselves for the less pretentious but more fundamental pursuits of life.

The Conference made no warfare against the higher education of the race. It claimed, on the contrary, that all kinds of education—industrial and academic, scientific and literary—were necessary and important.

The Committee on Resolutions, appointed to express the sense of the meeting as to the matters discussed, consisted of the following members: Prof. Thomas N. Chase, of Atlanta University; President W. P. Thirkield, of Gammon Seminary; President Randall, of Lincoln University; President Mitchell, of Leland University, New Orleans; Prof. Delaney, of St. Augustine School, Raleigh, N. C.; Rev. Dr. A. L. Phillips, of Tuscaloosa, Ala.; and Rev. H. H. Proctor, of Atlanta, Ga.

The following resolutions were reported and passed by the Workers' Conference:

Resolved, First, That we regard universal industrial education as fundamental to the prosperity of our whole people,

and feel grateful for the generous support which it has received in Tuskegee and other similar institutions. We also express our conviction that the higher education of many young women and young men is not secondary in importance, both because of its effect in developing the mind, and the wide field which it opens up for educational work in the higher schools.

Resolved, Second, That we invite the attention of college graduates to the need of intelligent leadership in the conduct of all the common industries, which are rapidly passing out of the hands of the colored people into the management of companies which monopolize the work, but do not give the colored workers employment.

Resolved, Third, That we especially emphasize the duty of all college graduates to encourage by instruction all who labor in manual industries, and to add to their instructions the force of their own example.

Resolved, Fourth, That we express our strong conviction that, in the matter of general education, the various Christian churches and ministers should unite to secure a better school and a longer term, and that all denominationalism should be excluded from public education.

Resolved, Fifth, That we urge all teachers in State schools, during the time of their labor in any district, thoroughly to identify themselves with every interest of the people in their homes and occupations.

Resolved, Sixth, That we remind all our teachers that their work is of a truly missionary character, and that the best reward of their self-denying labor will be, not their salary, but the blessing of the Son of Man. On the other hand, we remind the patrons of such schools that the "laborer is worthy of his hire," and urge them to make more liberal provision for their support.

Resolved, Seventh, That this Conference express its conviction of the supreme importance of an immediate and a larger increase of godly and thoroughly educated ministers of the

Gospel, who will be willing to labor in the country districts, where eighty-five per cent. of the people live.

Another resolution, urging the appointment of an agent by the State for the purpose of arousing the colored people toward an educational revival, was passed. This agent would visit every portion of the State in the interest of the masses of the people; hold teachers' institutes; address the churches; show the people how, by private subscriptions, to lengthen the school terms; in short, emphasize what it is possible for them to do to help themselves.

This resolution provoked a lively discussion. Mr. W. H. Stewart, Editor of the *American Baptist*, of Louisville, Ky., contended that the colored people in Alabama should not pay taxes for school purposes and then tax themselves further to lengthen the school term. They should demand an equal division of school moneys and a school session as long as the whites. The threadbare argument that the blacks paid no taxes, because they owned no land, is misleading, since the brunt of taxation always falls on the laboring man. The negro is supremely the laborer in the South, and no other workingman in the world pays higher taxes for educational purposes than he. In Kentucky, Mr. Stewart showed that the colored people had won this point, so that they had equal educational advantages with the whites. He believed it was time the movement began in Alabama.

Others, speaking along the same line, thought the State of Alabama was doing her best, and was too poor to pay for good school-houses throughout the State. Emphasis was laid on the work of Tuskegee graduates, who had gone into many communities and, in a quiet way, had shown the people how to make some sacrifices to build school-houses, to prolong the school session from three to five months, and, in some cases, to eight and nine months.

At the close of this discussion the Conference adjourned, the benediction being pronounced by Bishop Benjamin Tucker Tanner, of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.



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